

**MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES (amended)
OCTOBER 4, 2004**

Chair Darrel Fournier called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 1:07 p.m. at the DPS Fallen Heroes Conference Room, Central Maine Commerce Center, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta. Members present were Michael Albert, Jack Berry, John Cannon, Robert Gardiner (for Art Cleaves), John Dean, Chief Darrel Fournier, Geoffrey Maker, Harty Norris, Chief Jethro Pease, Charles Soltan, David Wacker, Steve Willis and Susan Pinette (staff). Members excused were Jay Bradshaw, Chief Jeffrey Cammack, Al Godfrey and Senator Richard Nass. Members absent included Representative Patricia Blanchette, Senator Bruce Bryant, Representative Tom Bull, Representative Robert Duplessie, Edward Johnston and Bill Williams. Alex McPhedran from the Maine State Federation of Fire Fighters was a guest of the Fire Commission.

A motion by Jethro Pease, seconded by Charlie Soltan, to accept the minutes of the June 7th and September 13th meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

Reports of Committees

Fire Commission members reviewed and discussed the preliminary plans for the 2005 Blaine House Conference on Emergency First Response (Spring Conference). The Spring Conference is scheduled for Friday, March 11, 2005 at the Augusta Civic Center. Members tentatively agreed on the following agenda:

8:30am	Registration
9:00am	Welcome and Keynote Address (Senator Collins?)
9:30am	Coffee break
9:45am	General Session
11:45am	Lunch
1:00pm	Break-out Sessions (45 minutes each)
3:00pm	Spring Conference Ends

Once again, Maine Municipal Association has agreed to assist the Fire Commission. MMA will print and distribute the Spring Conference brochures and coordinate the conference registrations. Maine Fire Training and Education (MFT&E) has also agreed to design the Spring Conference brochure. Fire Commission members discussed the various speakers and their roles at the Spring Conference. Members agreed to have one keynote speaker at the morning session. Senator Collins was the unanimous first choice and will be contacted for her availability. Members suggested a larger role for the Governor beyond his presentation of the Best Practices Awards at the luncheon and will be asked to

make opening remarks at the morning session. Members decided the latter portion of the morning session (10:30am to 11:45am) should focus on a topic of general interest to conference attendees. Fire Commission members agreed the timely topic of clandestine labs (met amphetamine) would interest both fire service and law enforcement attendees.

Fire Commission members had a lengthy discussion regarding the afternoon breakout sessions. Members agreed the individual workshops should run 45 minutes and be offered on a rotating basis throughout the afternoon. The topics members agreed to offer at the Spring Conference included:

1. Department of Labor update
2. Grant applications (FEMA)
3. Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
4. Recruitment and retention issues (Ed Holohan from Penflex)
5. Law enforcement
6. Homeland Security grants (MEMA)
7. Implications of 2004 Referendum (Question 1)- what now?
8. Fire Commission- questions and answers

Fire Commission members also discussed the role of exhibitors and vendors at the Spring Conference. Various emergency first response organizations will set up informational booths. Members agreed that vendors also serve an informational purpose. The discussion also included vendors as sponsors, access to conference attendees and numbers allowed.

A motion by John Cannon, seconded by Mike Albert, to allow private vendors to sponsor and show their products at the Spring Conference for a minimum fee of \$300. The motion passed unanimously.

Fire Commission members agreed to include the Training Facilities Committee's final report as part of the Fire Commission's final report to the Legislature and the Governor.

Members were reminded to send their suggestions for the 2004 Best Practices awards to the Best Practices committee. Chair Berry reports he has a number of good candidates but encourages members to submit their nominations prior to the end of the year.

Old Business

Fire Commission members discussed truss construction warning signs and whether to sponsor legislation in 2005. Members discussed many options including rulemaking versus legislation, Bangor's successful city ordinance as a model and the need to include industry in any discussions/decisions. Members agreed a pre-rulemaking/legislation discussion among the interested parties was

necessary before the Fire Commission could determine whether to sponsor legislation.

A motion by Charlie Soltan, seconded by John Dean, to arrange a meeting as soon as possible among interested parties to discuss how to achieve marking truss construction. The Fire Commission will look at the results of this proposed meeting and determine whether to go forward with a rulemaking or legislative option to the truss construction marking issue. This proposed meeting of interested parties will not be part of a regular Fire Commission meeting. The motion passed with one member opposed (Jethro Pease).

A motion by Mike Albert, seconded by John Cannon, that the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission opposes Question 1 (tax cap initiative). The motion passed with three members abstaining (Jethro Pease, Steve Willis and Dave Wacker).

Fire Commission members agreed to issue a press release opposing the referendum question and to add the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to the list of names in the coalition of organizations and individuals opposing the tax cap.

New Business

Fire Commission members discussed the alternatives for funding the Health Care and Training Facilities studies. Members were informed of the history of the Health Care study, the steps the Fire Commission has already taken (RFP and sole source options), the difficulties in determining the actual cost of the study and best estimates being \$50,000 to \$75,000, and submitting legislation in 2005. Members agreed to seek funding from the legislature this year and to also consider alternative sources for future assistance, such as grants and foundations.

A motion by Jack Berry, seconded by Charlie Soltan, that the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission initiates the process to sponsor legislation in 2005 and requests \$75,000 to fund a study for healthcare for Maine's firefighters. The motion passed unanimously.

Legislative members of the Fire Commission will be asked to contact the Revisor's Office of the Maine Legislature to begin drafting legislation for the Fire Commission.

Fire Commission members received copies from Hermon Fire Chief Larry Willis regarding emergency personnel directing traffic during emergency situations. (*letter attached*) Jethro Pease forwarded Chief Willis's letter to the Fire

Commission. Members discussed the issues presented in Chief Willis's letter, the suggestion to mirror the school bus law (*attached*), concerns with emergency personnel directing traffic, training of personnel, lack of the proper equipment, fire versus police duties and concerns during emergencies, rural versus urban issues, and whether this is a local issue or if a state law is needed. Members agreed to ask for input from Maine's Public Safety Department and table further discussion until members can discuss the issue with other interested parties.

Fire Commission members agreed to sponsor a second Maine Fire Service/EMS day at the State House. Staff will contact the Clerk's Office and reserve the Hall of Flags.

Members agreed to recognize retiring Fire Commission members for their service to the Fire Commission by honoring them at a presentation at the Spring Conference.

A motion by Charlie Soltan, seconded by Dave Wacker, that the Fire Commission honors retiring members with a plaque presented at the Spring Conference luncheon. The motion passed unanimously.

Members were reminded to review the information on statewide mutual aide agreements they received earlier this year. Additional copies will be emailed with the November meeting notice.

Members were informed that the new address of the Public Safety Department is 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta, Maine. The mailing address remains 52 State House Station (SFMO). The new phone number is 626-3870 and the FAX is 287-6251.

For planning purposes, the next three meetings are scheduled for:

Monday, November 8 th	DPS Fallen Heroes conference room
Monday, December 6 th	DPS Fallen Heroes conference room
Monday, January 3 rd	State House (specific room TBA)

With no further business to come before the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission, Chair Fournier adjourned the meeting at 2:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Pinette

